DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 127 346 TM 005 435

AUTHOR Gupta, Venu G.
TITLE Effect of Varied Instructions on Student Ratings of College Instructors.
PUB DATE [73]
NOTE 8p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Students; College Teachers; Graduate Students; *Higher Education; *Student Evaluation of Teacher Performance; Teaching Assistants; Undergraduate Students
IDENTIFIERS Illinois Course Evaluation Questionnaire

ABSTRACT

Using the Illinois Course Evaluation Questionnaire, 850 college students' evaluations of their teachers did not vary significantly with the use of 3 different sets of instructions, each explaining a different purpose for the evaluation. In evaluating 40 graduate teaching assistants, assistant professors and full professors, graduate students rated their instructors higher than did undergraduates; and teaching assistants received higher ratings than the assistant or full professors. With the use of a separate "Person Item", a significantly high positive correlation between ratings of instructors "as instructors" and their ratings "as persons" was detected. (BW)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Venu G. Gupta
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER.

ED127346

Effect of Varied Instructions on Student Ratings of College Instructors

Venu G. Gupta, Ph.D.

Kutztown State College

Recently, the student ratings of faculty and their courses has become an extremely popular method of faculty evaluation. The results of these ratings are used not only by the faculty as a feedback to improve their teaching behavior and classroom practices but also by the student governments in helping the students to make decisions regarding faculty and course selections and by the college or university administrators for making the important faculty decisions, like retentions, promotions and pay raises. In spite of the various uses of the results of faculty evaluations, the students are generally given the impression that the results are going to be used by their instructors alone for self-improvement. The major purpose of this study was to investigate into the question: What would happen if the students are clearly told that the results of their evaluations will be used by different groups of people on campus, for different purposes? There are no studies done, to date, to see the effect of varied instructions on student ratings of faculty. For the purpose of this study, three different sets of instructions were written and used with the three experimental groups. Group A was told that the information from evaluation will be primarily to aid the instructors in improving their instruction. Group B was told that the information

TM005 435

will be used by the university administrators (deans and chairpersons) to guide them in faculty promotions, retentions and pay raises, etc. Group C was told that the results of evaluation will be used by the students on campus to guide them in course and instructor selection, at the time of registration. It was hypothesized that the students getting different instructions for faculty evaluation will rate their instructors significantly differently. Further purposes of the study were to investigate whether professorial ranks are differentially evaluated as well as whether there is a difference in the evaluation of graduate and undergraduate students. It was hypothesized that the graduate students will give significantly different ratings to their instructors from the undergraduate students and that the students will give significantly different ratings to the instructors in different ranks.

Method

Subjects. A total of 850 graduate and undergraduate students evaluated forty graduate teaching assistants, assistant professors and full professors, on a large urban campus. All the instructors volunteered to participate in the study. The average number of students per class for the classes used in the study was 21.25.

Materials. The main instrument used for faculty evaluation was the Illinois Course Evaluation Questionnaire (CEQ) (Aleamoni, 1972a; Aleamoni & Spencer, 1973). In addition to the total score, the CEQ yields six subscores on six aspects of the total instructional situation. It takes 10 minutes to administer and is machine scorable.

It is thoroughly tested for its high validity and reliability. (Aleamoni, 1972b).

An additional item called 'Person (P) Item' was also written and used to enable the students to rate their instructors 'as persons' disregarding their characteristics as teachers. It was considered interesting to find out how the ratings of instructors 'as instructors' would be related to their ratings 'as persons'.

Three different purposes of evaluation were printed separately for use with the three experimental groups on green sheets of paper. These sheets were called the purpose of evaluation sheets.

Thus, the materials used by each subject in this study consisted of a copy of the CEQ, a copy of the P item and a purpose of evaluation sheet for a particular experimental group.

Procedure. The data was collected during the regular class time, in regular classrooms and during the last three weeks of an academic term. The pre-prepared packages of materials when distributed in a class, automatically divided the students in each class into three experimental groups to study the effect of three different sets of instructions on faculty evaluation. The instructors were requested to leave the classroom during evaluation so that the students may evaluate them under non-threatening situation.

Results

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) factorial design was used as the statistical procedure to analyze the data since the study

involved the simultaneous analysis of multiple independent variables and multiple dependent variables. In addition to the underlying assumptions common with ANOVA, MANOVA assumes relatedness of the dependent variables (Cooley & Lohnes, 1971; Kirk, 1968). In order to check this relatedness, intercorrelations among the dependent variables were computed before doing MANOVA. All correlations were found to be positive and significant ($p < .01$).

The effect of the different sets of instructions for faculty evaluation was found to be statistically nonsignificant ($p > .05$). The effect of class (graduate versus undergraduate classes) was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The graduate students tended to assign higher ratings to their instructors than did the undergraduate students. The effect of faculty rank was also found to be significant ($p < .05$) on the faculty evaluation. The Newman Keuls tests (Kirk, 1968) were applied to pinpoint the differences among the different faculty ranks. On the whole, the graduate teaching assistants tended to get significantly higher ratings than did assistant and full professors. The univariate analysis was also done for each of the dependent variables, to verify the results of multivariate analyses. In all cases, the results of univariate analyses were consistent with the results of the multivariate analyses.

Discussion

There is no previous research evidence to support or to contradict the finding that the students getting different instructions for faculty evaluation did not rate their instructors differently. It is

just possible that while evaluating their instructors even under different instructions, the students operated under the set created by the repeated use of standard instructions given to them for faculty evaluation, term after term. Due to that set, they, perhaps, evaluated their instructors as if under the same standard instructions.

The finding that the graduate students assigned significantly higher ratings to their instructors than did the undergraduate students, is supported by research evidence from several studies such as Downie (1952); Gage (1961); and Lovell and Haner (1955). All these studies reported that more advanced students tended to give more favorable ratings to their instructors than less advanced students. The graduate classes are generally smaller, and, therefore, allow better student-teacher interaction; have more mature students who are tolerant to the individual teaching styles of their instructors; and are taught by the experts in their areas. Due to such reasons, the higher ratings of the graduate courses and their instructors seem to be justifiable.

The finding that the graduate teaching assistants tended to get higher ratings than did the assistant and full professors is also neither supported nor contradicted by any previous research evidence. Most of the previously done studies (e.g. Downie, 1952; Gage, 1961) compared the ratings of only the different ranks within the regular full time faculty. No study compared the graduate teaching assistants with the regular full time faculty. There seems to be at least one

major reason for the higher ratings of the graduate teaching assistants. Knowing that the graduate teaching assistants are also primarily the students like them, the students may have identified themselves more closely with them. They may have assigned higher ratings to them with the sympathy that the graduate teaching assistants are also students who are contending with the regular faculty. Because of this closeness, they may have liked them better 'as persons'. Very high significant positive correlation ($p < .01$) between the ratings of instructors 'as instructors' with their ratings 'as persons' found in this study suggests that an instructor may get high ratings as a teacher not necessarily because he possesses all the characteristics of a good teacher but simply because he is liked by his students 'as a person'. Under these circumstances of lesser hostility and more sympathetic attitudes, the graduate teaching assistants may have been assigned higher ratings.

In summary, it may be stated that firstly, on large urban campuses, the results of just one comprehensive faculty evaluation system may be sufficient for use by all groups on campus; secondly, the graduate students may be expected to assign higher ratings to their instructors than the undergraduate students; thirdly, the graduate teaching assistants may be expected to get different ratings from the regular full time faculty; and finally, the instructors who are liked by their students as persons, may also be expected to get higher ratings as instructors.

References

Aleamoni, L. M. Illinois Course Evaluation Questionnaire results interpretation manual. Research Report No. 331, University of Illinois, Office of Instructional Resources, Measurement and Research Division, 1972. (a)

Aleamoni, L. M. A review of recent reliability and validity studies on the Illinois Course Evaluation Questionnaire. Mimeographed research memorandum No. 127, University of Illinois, Office of Instructional Resources, Measurement and Research Division, 1972. (b)

Aleamoni, L. M. & Spencer, R. E. The Illinois Course Evaluation Questionnaire: A description of its development and a report of some of its results. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 1973, 33, 669-684.

Cooley, W. W., & Lohnes, P. R. Multivariate data analysis. New York: Wiley, 1971.

Downie, N. W. Student evaluation of faculty. Journal of Higher Education, 1952, 23, 495-496.

Gage, N. L. The appraisal of college teaching: An analysis of ends and means. Journal of Higher Education, 1961, 32, 17-22.

Kirk, R. E. Experimental design: Procedures for the behavioral sciences. Belmont, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1968.

Lovell, G. D., & Haner, C. F. Forced-choice applied to college faculty rating. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 1955, 15 291-304.